

Monday Night Raw – October 22, 2018: Superman Punch It In The Face



IMG Credit: WWE

Monday Night Raw

Date: October 22, 2018

Location: Dunkin Donuts Center, Providence, Rhode Island

Commentators: Corey Graves, Renee Young, Michael Cole

It's the go home show for Evolution so expect a lot of hearing about Nikki Bella vs. Ronda Rousey, which somehow is the highest profile match we can have on what was supposed to be a top level show. Other than that we have Crown Jewel next week, even though we're not allowed to hear where the show is taking place. Let's get to it.

[Here are last week's results if you need a recap.](#)

Here's Roman Reigns to say that he can't fight every day. He's been wrestling for eleven years and now it's back. Therefore he has to vacate the title and seek treatment. He was diagnosed with leukemia when he was 22 years old and now he has to do it again. Reigns was done with football but the WWE gave him a chance. Whether it was cheering or booing, the fans always reacted to him and that's what matters most. The best thing for him to do right now is to go home and focus on his family and his

health.

This is NOT a retirement speech because he's coming back to this ring when he's healthy again. When he comes back, it's not about titles but about a purpose. He wants to show his family and friends that when live throws a curve ball at him, he crowds the plate and swings for the fences. Reigns leaves the title in the ring and walks away, only to be greeted by Seth Rollins and Dean Ambrose on the stage for a big hug and one more Shield pose.

The announcers are nearly in tears talking about what happened and wish Reigns the best.

Finn Balor vs. Bobby Lashley

Lio Rush hypes Lashley up as he throws Balor around. Balor knocks Lashley to the floor and chases after Rush, only to get run over by Lashley as we take a break. Back with Balor caught in a nerve hold as Rush keeps up the LASHLEY chants. Finn fights up but has to escape the delayed vertical suplex. The Sling blade looks to set up the Coup de Grace but Lashley pops up and blasts him with a clothesline. Balor is fine enough to grab a rollup for the fast pin at 8:29.

Rating: C-. This didn't have time to go anywhere and it's not like the fans cared about it after what opened the show. I know it's hard to think about the title picture at the moment but Reigns leaving is going to open the door for a lot of new names in the main event picture. Balor could be one of them and a clean win here might suggest that being the case.

The announcers talk about the future of the Universal Title. Nothing has been determined yet but we might be getting updates throughout the night.

We look back at Drew McIntyre hitting the Claymore on Braun Strowman last week.

Dolph Ziggler and McIntyre say they have to look over their shoulders every night. McIntyre says when Strowman got done with Ziggler, he was coming for him so it was attacking first. After tonight, Ziggler won't have to worry about a thing. McIntyre leaves to go monster hunting.

Sasha Banks vs. Ruby Riott

Preview of the six woman tag at Evolution. The early Riott Squad distraction lets Ruby beat Banks down from behind and we take an early break with Banks in trouble. Back with Banks getting elbowed in the face for two but sending Ruby into the buckle to get a breather. The right hands set up the double knees in the corner, followed by the middle rope Meteora. The Bank Statement goes on and draws Sarah Logan in, only to have Bayley make the save. That's enough of a distraction for Ruby to send her into the corner, setting up the Riott Kick for the pin at 8:44.

Rating: D+. Nothing to see here, though again there's only so much energy you can have all night long. I'm still trying to wrap my head around it and that's making it hard to focus on the show. For a setup for the six woman tag, this was perfectly acceptable, even if this story has been going on for what feels like ever.

We see the Undertaker and Kane's promo from last week.

Nia Jax says she'll win the battle royal.

Here's DX for a chat. They talk about being afraid of things but neither of them are scared of anything. Shawn: "Ain't neither of us running for Mayor!" The other word running around has been nostalgia, which Shawn hoped was just a Greek word for "new merch". It's really a polite way of saying old. But then again, the #1 movie at the box office came out 40 years ago and two weeks ago, they sold out a 70,000 person stadium. HHH: "Maybe old is just another way of saying "we're better than you"".

I'll let you make your own jokes and stick with HHH saying the DX logo has been around for twenty two years. HHH talks about how there's another X that says the future is better too. Shawn: "And we're running that too!" They're not coming to Crown Jewel to make you laugh, but to hand you a beating. Shawn loads up the catchphrase but some electrical noises go off...followed by a gong.

Undertaker and Kane appear on the screen, saying pride goes before destruction. DX can bring their delusions and try to retrieve their lost respect. They'll unleash their utter contempt because Shawn can't outrun

the reaper or survive the Brothers of Destruction. The Brothers will own their souls for eternity and torment them in the deepest pits. They pour dirt into a grave. On a show where the Universal Champion says he has leukemia. And before they go to a country that is in the headlines for murdering a journalist.

We see the Reigns promo again.

Wrestlers have sent out tweets to Reigns.

There will be a new champion crowned at Crown Jewel when Strowman faces Brock Lesnar in a one on one title match.

We look back at the Bella Twins/Ronda Rousey segment from last week.

Here's a somewhat shaken up Paul Heyman for a chat. His thoughts and prayers are with Reigns and he's proud to have been in a locker room with that much pride for their friend. Tonight, Reigns was a man who sacrificed what he loved because he couldn't be the Universal Champion. When you're Universal Champion, you've earned the right to have people point at you and say you're the best. Until 8:05pm EST tonight, we had the right to brag that the Universal Champion was the best in the world.

But now, no one is the champion so we need to find a new best in the world. There is only one person worthy of being champion and it certainly isn't Braun Strowman. The only person who deserves to be walking into the Octagon as the Universal Champion is Brock Lesnar, and Strowman isn't in his league. Cue Strowman and reality sets in quickly. Strowman says he's going to bring the title back to Raw and when Reigns gets back from beating leukemia, he's the first man in line for a title shot. For now though, Lesnar is going to get these hands. Strowman goes to leave and walks into the Claymore from McIntyre.

Post break Ziggler praises McIntyre, who says he did what most of the roster won't do. He's a grown man who doesn't check under his bed for monsters. When Strowman shakes the cobwebs clear, he'll realize that he needed them. Tonight, they defend the Tag Team Titles.

Here's Elias to play a little guitar. Before he gets into the song about

Apollo Crews though, here's Apollo to cut him off.

Apollo Crews vs. Elias

Crews dropkicks him to the floor to start and hits a moonsault off the apron as we take a break. Back with Elias holding a chinlock for a rather long while until Crews powers up. The jumping clothesline drops Elias and the standing shooting star press gets two. A fall away slam into a Samoan drop is good for the same but Elias grabs the rope to avoid the toss powerbomb. The jumping knee to the face sets up Drift Away to finish Apollo at 8:00.

Rating: D. Well so much for Crews. I'm still not sure what the point is in having Elias out there for these nothing matches over and over, but at least they're doing something with him and keeping him in front of the crowd. That's certainly better than having him sit on the bench for weeks at a time and letting the fans forget about him. Still though, give him a push already.

Kurt Angle talks about how tough the World Cup of Wrestling is going to be. He talks about (as in reads cue cards about) all of his possible opponents with highlight packages of all seven of them. Angle has done a lot of things, but now he has the chance to be the best in the world. On this one night, he can do it all again.

Back from a break and here's Elias to try the song again. This time it's Baron Corbin interrupting, saying it's his job to keep the show moving. Stephanie McMahon has sent him out here for something far more important than Elias playing his little guitar. He better quit staring at Corbin too, because if Stephanie didn't like him, Elias would be fired.

Elias says he was in his own little world there for a second and writing a song in his head that he's going to sing right now. The new song is about how Corbin is a coward and a puppet but Corbin has the mic cut. Elias walks off but comes back and blasts Corbin with the guitar. The face turn is a long time coming, but I'm not sure how well it's going to work. Still though, you couldn't hold it back much longer.

We look at the Bellas turning on Ronda Rousey two weeks ago.

Here are the Bellas and Rousey to sign. The twins bail as soon as Rousey shows up but she says she's not going to beat them up tonight. Instead, she's going to sign a contract so she can beat them up on Sunday. She even offers to put her hands behind her back because if they can beat her up like that, her own mother would kill her. They have her word, which is Ronda's bond.

The Bellas come in and mock her for not being as good in judo as her mother or for not retiring undefeated from UFC. Nikki says Ronda's mother is already ashamed of her so imagine what it's going to be like when a Diva beats her for the title. She even slaps Ronda, who signs and promises to end Nikki on Sunday. This was WAY better than last week, partially because it didn't go on for ten minutes. Now hopefully Sunday's match follows this week's example and not last week's.

Reigns' speech again.

Rollins and Ambrose say there are no words to talk about how they're feeling, so tonight they're going to win for Roman.

Dana Brooke vs. Nia Jax vs. Tamina vs. Ember Moon

One fall to a finish. It's a brawl to start as the announcers try to push Tamina vs. Nia as an interesting battle. Nia drops Dana and hits a flip splash but gets superkicked to the floor by Tamina. Ember goes up and hits the Eclipse to pin Tamina at 1:37.

Evolution rundown.

Here's Titus O'Neil on the stage to introduce a group of breast cancer survivors with title belts.

Trish Stratus and Lita are ready to fight on Sunday and aren't worried about Mickie James and Alexa Bliss. Alicia Fox comes up to make fun of them but here's Mickie from behind for the cheap shot brawl. Security breaks it up but Trish and Lita run back in to beat them up. Trish: "That's how we did it in the Attitude Era."

Tag Team Titles: Seth Rollins/Dean Ambrose vs. Dolph Ziggler/Drew McIntyre

Ziggler and McIntyre are defending. It's a brawl to start with the champs being knocked outside to send us to an early break. Back with Rollins hitting a suicide dive onto both champs but McIntyre kicks him down back inside. Ziggler comes in, teases a superkick to Ambrose, and goes with a chinlock on Rollins.

That doesn't last long as Rollins fights up and throws him down, followed by an enziguri on McIntyre. Ziggler is fast enough to get over and pull Ambrose off the apron though, leaving Rollins to take the reverse Alabama Slam. Back from a second break with Rollins making a blind tag and dropping a frog splash for two on McIntyre as Ambrose dives onto Ziggler. McIntyre gets put in the Tree of Woe but of course sits up to throw Rollins down.

Rollins is fine enough to superplex Ziggler into the Falcon Arrow as the fans are going nuts on these kickouts, probably because they know a title change is coming. The Stomp misses so Rollins lifts Ziggler up for a powerbomb into McIntyre. Dean comes back in but Dirty Deeds is broken up and a Claymore sends him outside.

Ziggler sends Rollins shoulder first into the post and gets two off the Zig Zag. The Claymore/Zig Zag combination is broken up by Ambrose but here's Strowman as Rollins and Ziggler clothesline each other. McIntyre gets up to fight Strowman but they brawl into the crowd. Ziggler tries to grab a title but gets Stomped for the pin and the title at 19:16.

Rating: B. Well....yeah. This was the most obvious title change in recent history but at the same time, it's the only thing they could do. With the Reigns situation, dedicating the match to him was the best thing they could do to guarantee an invested crowd during the title change. Another entertaining match too.

Post match the celebration is on....until Ambrose hits Dirty Deeds on Rollins. The place gets REALLY quiet as Ambrose pounds away on him and shouts about Rollins thinking he's funny. The beatdown is on with Dean throwing a title at him and then peeling back the floor mats for Dirty Deeds on the concrete. Dean rips off the Shield shirt and leaves through the crowd to end the show.

Overall Rating: C. I'm giving this one a big break tonight because of the opening announcement changing everything. That being said, I'm less interested in seeing either Evolution or Crown Jewel than I was coming in, though I'm wanting to find out where some other things are going. This week's show made those two pay per views feel more like things we have to get through rather than something I want to watch, which is a really bad sign. Not a great show, but you have to give them a break on some parts of that.

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